

CLAIMS

1. A method for defining a context identifier when compressing header fields of data packets, the method comprising:
 - defining a context for a compressor and decompressor of a data packet flow, the context controlling the operation of the compressor and decompressor,
 - identifying the context by a context identifier attached to the data packet, and
 - defining the length of the context identifier in the context identifier of the data packet being transmitted between the compressor and decompressor.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the context identifier comprises a field of at least one bit for defining the length of the context identifier.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the length of the context identifier is defined in each transmitted context identifier of the data packet.
4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the length of the context identifier is defined only in the context identifier of the data packet transmitted first.
5. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising defining a different length for the context identifier of the data packet flow transferred from the compressor to the decompressor than for the context identifier of the data packet flow transferred from the decompressor to the compressor.
6. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising performing said header field compression according to the ROHC definition.
7. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising performing said header field compression on the radio interface of a mobile system, such as the UMTS system.
8. A compression system for compressing header fields of data packets, which system comprises a compressor for compressing a data packet flow being transmitted and a decompressor for decompressing a data packet flow being received, the compressor and decompressor of the data packet

flow are configured to be defined a context, by means of which the operation of the compressor and decompressor is controlled, and the context is configured to be identified by a context identifier attached to the data packet, and the length of the context identifier is configured to be defined in the
5 context identifier of the data packet being transmitted between the compressor and the decompressor.

9. A system as claimed in claim 8, wherein
the context identifier comprises a field of at least one bit for defining
the length of the context identifier.

10 10. A system as claimed in claim 8 or 9, wherein
the length of the context identifier is configured to be defined in the
context identifier of each data packet being transmitted.